

H4 COMMENTARY ON MACAULAY'S HISTORY

in alternate slices a chronological narrative of political and military events with chapters on social history.

•Macaulay's arrangement was more skilful. After describing the social, economic, and intellectual state of England at the date when his narrative commences, he strove to weave the social, economic, and intellectual facts into the fabric of his account of political and military events. The description of England in chapter iii was supplemented by descriptions of Ireland in chapter xii and of Scotland in chapter xiii, when the scene of the story shifts from one country to another. It was completed by episodes and descriptive digressions, introduced as occasion served into the course of the narrative, which dealt with topics omitted in chapter iii or incompletely dealt with there. The attack of James II on the Church afforded opportunity for an account of the universities and an estimate of their political influence. The parliamentary debates of 1691 permitted the insertion of an excursus on the history of British trade in the East. Minor changes of manners and customs were incidentally mentioned in a paragraph or a sentence, in connection with political events which they illustrated. In that way Macaulay contrived to tell us when tea-drinking became popular, when a taste for oriental china began, and why a particular kind of lace

cravat came into fashion in 1692. But this episodical method of treating social and economic history has many drawbacks. It leads to the omission of certain subjects and to the inadequate discussion of others. The exigencies of the chronological narrative of military and political events determine when and where economic and social facts shall be mentioned, and which of them shall be included. It leads also to the separate and fragmentary statement of facts which should be grouped together, because they explain each other.